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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/AGS, EUR/PGI, S/CT

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SUBJECT: Lackluster NPD Demonstration in Frankfurt: "The Nation not Globalization"

¶1. SUMMARY: On July 7, 500 to 700 NPD supporters demonstrated in Frankfurt under the slogan "the Nation not Globalization," repeating themes of far-right protesters of the G-8 summit in Heiligendamm in early June. The Frankfurt city government licensed the demonstration in the Neue Borse, an industrial, unpopulated suburb and the marchers never came to the city center. A much larger official counter-demonstration of some 2,000 participants rallied in the city center's Roemerplatz, where Lord Mayor Petra Roth (CDU) gave an address, while an additional 2,500 extreme left demonstrators attempted to disrupt the NPD demonstration. An extraordinarily large police presence (8,000 police officers pulled from all over Germany) prevented extreme left protesters from facing off against their right-wing counterparts, keeping violence and vandalism to a minimum. Police estimate around 200 people were detained from both sides, with only eight held on charges. The NPD had hoped to rally 2,000 demonstrators; far more than realized in fact. END SUMMARY.

¶2. The demonstration began two and a half hours late after counter-protesters from the extreme left blocked train tracks, preventing a special train of right-wing demonstrators from arriving. The turnout of 500-700 NPD demonstrators, who came from all over Germany, was substantially fewer than anticipated by police, media sources, and the NPD itself. The low turnout was partially ascribed to the fact that a similar protest took place in Rostock, drawing right-wing extremists from the East. Media sources described the demonstrators as unmotivated, disoriented and prone to in-fighting.

¶3. Helge Gerk, a specialist on Right-extremism for Common Centre for Information and Analysis of Politically Motivated Crime (GIAZ), observed that many of the NPD came from North-Rhine Westphalia, Bavaria and especially Rheinland-Pfalz. He stated that within the Hesse right-wing community, the demonstration was seen as a failure both because of the poor turnout and their isolated rallying point. Gerk also suggested, however, that those elements in the right movement who want to appeal to a broader audience in the January 2008 Hesse state election should be pleased that the protest was calm, thus avoiding the "bad Nazi" stereotype of the movement.

¶4. The much larger counter-demonstration on Roemerplatz included representatives of the Catholic and Protestant churches, unions, the Jewish community, and the Frankfurt youth organization "Jugendring." Some representatives of the Central Council of Jews called for a ban on the NPD.

¶5. Extreme left demonstrators remained relatively quiet until the evening as the Frankfurt police kept them far away from the right-wing demonstration. When the NPD participants left Frankfurt at 8PM, however, they were bombarded with bottles. At the end of the day, the police counted 190 detentions, only eight of whom were held on charges.

¶6. COMMENT: The NPD's lackluster turnout demonstrates that the Hesse NPD continues to rely on outside "comrades" from other states to boost its presence. Right-wing politics enjoy little success in

Hesse: In the 2005 Bundestag election, the NPD garnered 1.5% and 1.2% on the first and second ballots. The focus and nature of the protest showed some signs of NPD strategy for the January 2008 Hesse state election. The NPD stressed its anti-globalization theme, an issue that has resonance across the political spectrum in Germany. The NPD also continued to avoid scenes of violence and extremism, in an attempt to position itself as a "normal" political movement.

17. This cable was coordinated with Embassy Berlin.

POWELL